



**NEVADA
HEALTH
RESPONSE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 30, 2020

CONTACT: Meghan Delaney

Public Information Officer

pressroom@nvhealthresponse.nv.gov

Gov. Sisolak announces Nevada United: Roadmap to Recovery plan

Carson City, NV — Today, Nevada Governor Steve Sisolak laid out the State's Nevada United: Roadmap to Recovery plan, designed to build a path forward and safely restart Nevada's economy.

"This roadmap outlines a coordinated, state-specific plan to address the COVID-19 public health and economic crisis. The core guiding principle is that our efforts should be federally supported, state managed, and locally executed," **said Gov. Sisolak.** "I am confident that if leaders and stakeholders throughout Nevada work together to accomplish our shared goals, anything is possible, even in the most trying of times. We will do this as quickly and safely as we possibly can, with a gradual, phased-in approach."

See a full copy of this plan online here: <https://nvhealthresponse.nv.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/NEVADA-UNITED-ROADMAP-TO-RECOVERY.pdf>

In addition to the issuance of today's plan, yesterday Governor Sisolak extended his Stay at Home Directive to May 15, while Nevada works to meet the criteria previously laid out by the State.

The criteria includes a consistent downward trajectory of COVID-19 cases and hospitalization over a 14-day period, hospitals having the ability to maintain hospital capacity without employing Crisis Standards of Care, and expanded testing.

Case contract tracing must also be on track, so that the public health workforce can detect, test, trace, and work to isolate those that have contracted the virus.

Lastly, the health and protection of vulnerable populations must be ensured, with all efforts being done to minimize outbreaks in special settings like health facilities and nursing homes.

Once these criteria have been met, Phase 1 of the reopening can resume. The same measures that are currently in place, such as wearing face coverings when going out, avoiding unnecessary social interactions, keeping six (6) feet of space in between yourself and others, working from home, and avoiding all nonessential travel. Gatherings should still be limited to 10 or less, and vulnerable populations should remain home until the outbreak has subsided.

Gov. Sisolak also announced the formation of the Local Empowerment Advisory Panel, or "LEAP," a group of Nevada stakeholders who will serve as a resource for counties as they work through the necessary requirements to reopen and share best practices and guidelines for local communities.

The LEAP will also be working directly with the Governor's Office to inform all future directives governing businesses and public life throughout each phase of this roadmap to recovery.

Clark County Commission Chairwoman Marilyn Kirkpatrick will represent urban counties, and Eureka County Commission Chair will J.J. Goicoechea represent rural counties. They will be joined by representatives from the Nevada Association of Counties (NACO), and the Governor's Office of Economic Development, in addition to the Director of the Nevada Department of Business of Industry.

The LEAP will consult with business and industry representatives, worker and labor organizations, public health authorities, Nevada Hospital Association, local government representatives, state legislators, and other stakeholders, as needed, to help the state and our counties navigate each of the reopening phases.

A fully copy of the Governor's prepared remarks are below:

Good evening, thank you for being here.

Tonight, I am pleased to present to Nevadans our State-specific plan for reopening. A copy of the full plan can be found online at NVHealthResponse.nv.gov.

Nevada United: Roadmap to Recovery is designed to build a path forward and safely restart Nevada's economy. As the Governor of this great State, a former locally elected official, and most importantly, as a father and husband, I share our collective goal of seeing our communities get back to business.

We have taken great steps together as a state to keep Nevadans safe against COVID-19, and while we continue to do that, we must now chart a responsible path forward that will get Nevadans back to work under a "new normal."

This roadmap outlines a coordinated, state-specific plan to address the COVID-19 public health and economic crisis.

The core guiding principle is that our efforts should be "Federally supported, state managed, and locally executed."

I am confident that if leaders and stakeholders throughout Nevada work together to accomplish our shared goals, anything is possible, even in the most trying of times. We will do this as quickly and safely as we possibly can, with a gradual, phased-in approach.

When I became your Governor, I promised to put Nevada's families first. It breaks my heart to see Nevada families suffering because of COVID-19. But this roadmap helps put the State, and our families, back on track.

I've taken immense pride throughout this crisis whenever I see Nevadans helping Nevadans, and you should too. It's our resiliency and spirit that makes us great. We are Battle Born, and right now we are being tested in this battle against COVID-19. Together, we will be Nevada United and Battle Proven.

The reality is this: no single elected official, business, government entity, or individual Nevadan can accomplish this task alone. All of us have a role to play when it comes to ensuring the Silver State recovers and comes back stronger than ever, but it will require common sense and personal responsibility. And all of us play an important role in this roadmap.

In addition to the principle of being "federally supported, state managed and locally executed" there are a few other guiding principles in this roadmap that should drive our decision making that I wanted to highlight for Nevadans.

First, the timeline for a strong recovery will be determined by the virus and the behaviors of Nevadans. The reopening of Nevada will happen the same way the State was closed down – in phases and following the guidance of the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and medical experts.

Secondly, we must all work to ensure our response efforts encompass access for all at-risk populations, including older individuals, lower income Nevadans, tribal communities, racial and ethnic minorities, and our Veterans.

Finally, the State's management of the recovery and reopening process must remain flexible at all times, with ongoing monitoring of local and statewide data reporting and analysis. The State must maintain the ability to track warning signs in order to prevent an avoidable spread of the virus through aggressive intervention.

Look, I know this can be overwhelming. All this talk of infection and testing and ventilators over the last two months is not something we're all used to.

I know how most Nevadans are feeling right now. The fog feels like it's clearing away and many of you are probably asking why you're sitting at home...why are schools closed? Why can't you grab a beer with your buddies or go to a game with your family. I get it. Because we've done a good job, the threat of COVID-19 feels distant and abstract – to many, it might not feel as scary anymore.

But I have the unfortunate responsibility to remind all of us that the threat remains real. That just a month ago models were predicting high peaks of hospitalizations, an overloading of our healthcare system, and death tolls potentially in the tens of thousands. We can't forget that. Afterall, there is still no vaccine for COVID-19 at this time.

This means that in Nevada, the only reason the number of confirmed cases and deaths is not significantly higher is due to the implementation of strong social distancing measures -- which is why the criteria for reopening I announced last week are so critical to our future success.

I want to quickly give a refresher on our criteria for reopening, and a status update as of today:

1) Consistent and sustainable downward trajectory of COVID-19 cases and a decrease in the trend of COVID-19 hospitalizations over a 14 day period.

As for the percentage of people testing positive, we reached what appears to be a peak on April 24th, and the rate has been declining since that time. We are watching this carefully.

Confirmed COVID hospitalizations are following an overall decrease, but we must evaluate this data carefully to be sure there the decreasing trend is sustained if more suspected cases are confirmed. We will be watching it closely.

2) Ensure our healthcare system is out of crisis mode and able to handle potential new surges in patients, along with non-COVID-19 related services

The hospital system is continuing to indicate an available immediate surge capacity for all-cause or COVID-19 patient influxes. This is a good sign.

3) Expanded ability for healthcare providers to administer tests for symptomatic patients and sufficient laboratory testing capacity to process COVID-19 testing samples.

*This is where we have some really good news: Due to the hard work of public health authorities, our incredible Nevada Division of Emergency Management, the Nevada National Guard, local leaders and more, Nevada now has the capacity to test ALL *symptomatic* individuals at this time, under the testing guidelines issued by the State. We have met this criteria.*

We know long term we will need more. We will be building our capacity to test asymptomatic Nevadans as well, which is one of the primary goals of our response efforts.

4) Sufficient public health workforce capacity in local and state health departments to conduct case contact tracing

These efforts continue to ramp up to scale, and I'm so proud of the progress made. We will be working with the counties and public health authorities to address the immediate and expanded workforce needs for case interview and contact tracing.

We feel very positive and are exploring many innovative ways to expand this workforce and be ready for Phase 1.

5) Sustained ability to protect vulnerable populations; outbreaks minimized in special settings like health facilities and nursing homes.

This is a highly qualitative criteria, and one we take seriously. We must have the ability to manage outbreaks in our facilities – because we know they will occur.

The State will continue to work with counties and local health authorities to quickly identify and contain outbreaks in facilities, including those housing older Nevadans, those living with disabilities, those currently incarcerated, and those in similar circumstances.

This tells me the following: we're doing good, but we still have some work to do to meet this criteria before reopening. I'm confident we can get there together and do it on our timeline.

Yesterday, I extended our existing Stay at Home directive through May 15th to give us time to meet this criteria and enter Phase 1 of our reopening in a good position. But I also recognized that due to the resilience and commitment of Nevadans, I could also begin easing some restrictions during this transition period.

This included expanding outdoor and recreational activities and providing some relief for our small business owners. Specifically:

All retail businesses will be allowed to operate under curbside commerce models, similar to curbside pickup currently allowed for restaurants and eateries. This includes curbside for retail cannabis dispensaries.

I want to thank Ann Silver and the Reno-Sparks Chamber of Commerce for working with me on this concept. The Chambers have been good partners in looking out for small businesses.

Drive-in services are now permitted for places of worship, as long as congregants stay in a vehicle and maintain at least 6 feet of social distance from people not in their household

Relaxing restrictions on outdoor activities, including golf, pickleball, and tennis, as long as they do it safely and in a way that prevents the spread of COVID-19

And in the next couple of weeks, our focus will be on meeting the criteria and moving into Phase 1 on or before May 15. But for right now, I know Nevadans are eager to hear what Phase 1 and the rest of our roadmap to recovery will look like.

I'm going to start by walking through an overview of what you can expect in Phase 1, or as we will call it, our "Battle Born Beginning":

The State will begin transitioning from community mitigation to aggressive case-based intervention efforts, where we will work to control the spread through testing individuals who may have the virus and identifying their close contacts.

Most importantly, we will continue to operate with strict social distancing guidelines. As Nevada gradually opens businesses and public life, and people who have been sheltering for weeks increase their interaction, it is absolutely essential for all of us to continue following the social distancing measures in place.

The virus remains among us, and people infected with the virus will spread it to others when strong social distancing measures are not in use.

That's also why it's critical that Nevadans continue wearing improvised face coverings, or "non-medical" masks, whenever they leave their home.

Folks should also continue to stay at home as much as possible and avoid all nonessential travel.

When it comes to vulnerable populations in Phase 1 and beyond, you must remain home until the outbreak has subsided. I urge all Nevadans to remember all those who are at risk and heed the call to continue protecting them.

When it comes to businesses and public life, Phase 1 will look like this:

We still won't be able to have social events and the prohibition on public gatherings over 10 people will remain in place.

We will begin opening back up some outdoor spaces and small businesses, under extremely aggressive social distancing measures. In other words, non-essential businesses, with some exceptions, may voluntarily reopen under restrictions. I'll get into the oversight structure in just a little bit.

Stand-alone retail stores can open up in Phase 1, but service providers and customers should be wearing face coverings. We still encourage curbside pickup or home delivery for retail stores, but customers may be able to shop in stores during Phase 1 with certain conditions.

We will consider the gradual reopening of dine-in restaurants and personal care services, but with strict guidelines to protect the health and safety of the workers and the customers. These will be thoroughly reviewed to ensure Nevadans can remain safe. Here's what we won't be able to open in Phase 1. Bars and nightclubs will remain closed, as will malls, large sporting events, large in-person places of worship and concerts. I know we are all looking forward to these opening up, but due to the density and risk, we will be unable to do so in Phase 1.

And when it comes to our biggest industry, all final decisions on how gaming establishments reopen in the State of Nevada will be determined by the Nevada Gaming Control Board. They will be working closely with local health authorities and medical experts to monitor progress. Here's what I can tell you today: gaming will not be opening at the start of Phase 1.

We will stay in Phase 1 for a minimum of two to three weeks – the recommended timeframe necessary to evaluate trends in cases and hospitalizations as we relax restrictions.

Some of this may sound familiar to those of you keeping track of plans in our fellow states who are navigating this reopening process just like us – but there's something uniquely Nevadan about our plan that I wanted to share with you - and it all goes back to our guiding principle of ensuring our roadmap is state managed and locally executed.

Up to this point, the State of Nevada has directed the response efforts for COVID-19 and determined which businesses can remain open under strict conditions and which businesses must close to prevent the spread. These were difficult decisions I had to make under an unimaginable emergency situation.

But in our effort to begin transitioning into more familiar territory, my goal with our state-specific plan is to return to the Nevada style of collective and collaborative governance and decision-making that sets us apart.

We may not always agree, but we are one of the few places where political disagreements will not prevent us from working together for the good of our State. I know this in my heart to be true. We don't always have to agree, but if you love Nevada, we're all going to do this together.

That's why in order to help us navigate Phase 1 and plan for future phases, we are going to partner with our locally elected officials at the county level, who are the experts in their communities.

State support and oversight through its existing regulatory and licensing structures will continue, but responsible county governments, with knowledge of their unique communities and their existing local licensing and regulatory structure, are in the best position to execute the gradual reopening of the businesses and public life of their local residents.

Under this state managed, locally executed roadmap, the State will continue to issue statewide standards and restrictions for each phase under which individuals and business must operate that are based on the social distancing requirements necessary to ensure that Nevada's public healthcare system is able to respond to any surge from COVID-19.

Only now, in an effort for Nevada to start returning to the normal structure of governmental decision-making, the county commission will have increasing responsibility for determining the manner in which businesses within its jurisdiction can open and operate in.

The main requirement is that county guidance and restrictions must meet or exceed the standards set forth by the state in the new directive I will be issuing prior to entering Phase 1.

It would be a disservice to the residents and businesses in our State to pretend like Esmerelda County is the same as Nye County or that Clark is the same as Elko. They're not, and that's okay – and it's why our response efforts should reflect our regional differences, while still operating under our shared, statewide goal of keeping Nevadans safe and restarting our economy.

And in order to ensure a strong state and local government partnership throughout each phase, I am happy to announce the formation of the Local Empowerment Advisory Panel,

or "LEAP," a group of Nevada stakeholders who will serve as a resource for counties as they work through the necessary requirements to reopen and share best practices and guidelines for local communities.

The LEAP will also be working directly with my Office to inform all future directives governing businesses and public life throughout each phase of this roadmap to recovery.

I am pleased to have Clark County Commission Chairwoman Marilyn Kirkpatrick represent urban counties, and Eureka County Commission Chair J.J. Goicoechea represent our rural counties. They will be joined by representatives from the Nevada Association of Counties (NACO), and the Governor's Office of Economic Development, in addition to the Director of the Nevada Department of Business of Industry.

The LEAP will consult with business and industry representatives, worker and labor organizations, public health authorities, Nevada Hospital Association, local government representatives, state legislators, and other stakeholders, as needed, to help the state and our counties navigate each of the reopening phases.

It's through your leadership that we will make sure this state managed and locally executed roadmap is customized for every corner of Nevada, but that the whole of our state remains united and healthy.

I come from the counties – I am the only Governor in the United States who most recently served as a county commissioner before becoming Governor.

I uniquely understand that counties know how to get the work done and they know what their residents and businesses need and how they operate. I have not, and will not, forget that.

And now as your Governor, I maintain the responsibility for the health and safety of ALL Nevadans, and I know that it will hurt all Nevadans if any of our 17 counties are unsafe. That's why I will require all counties to submit criteria reports and data tracking to the LEAP and the state so that we can monitor the progress through all the phases of reopening.

And if we need to pause to spend some extra time and attention taking care of one of our counties, we will do that. And the data we collect from our county leaders on a regular basis will let us do that together.

If there is a major new outbreak or cluster, the State will take quick mitigation actions to protect the health and safety of Nevadans. In some instances, this could even mean rolling-back some of the reopening steps.

It's in the best interest of Washoe County if Carson City does well. It's going to help White Pine if Lyon succeeds. This virus doesn't know borders, so we must work together as neighbors and Nevadans to make sure we are all progressing toward the criteria and staying on track.

As we make progress throughout Phase 1, we will assess the information together and go into Phase 2: our Silver State Stabilization phase. In this phase we will continue easing restrictions on business and public life, as appropriate and in coordination with local leaders and medical experts. We will not enter a new phase unless the data demonstrates that our public health system is ready to do it's job.

After each phase of reopenings, state public health officials will review the numbers of new COVID-19 daily case counts, hospitalizations, and deaths carefully. According to John Hopkins, "the results of reopening decisions will take 2 to 3 weeks to be reflected in those numbers. If case counts, hospitalizations, and deaths go up in that time, further actions in reopening should be paused, and steps should be taken to get control of the rising numbers."

And let me remind you of the third piece of our guiding principle: federally supported. We will continue to work with the Nevada congressional delegation to advocate on behalf of Nevada on the funding and resources Nevada businesses, residents, and communities to get the resources needed to respond to this public health and economic crisis. We cannot do this alone, and I want to thank Nevada's federal delegation for their hard work so far.

There's much more information in the Nevada United: Roadmap to Recovery Plan, which can be found online. This plan provides even more information on what our phases will look like, including potential duration, goals and expectations – all that will lead us to our eventual new normal.

I know these remarks have been long, but I find it important to summarize:

The next 15 days will be our active transition to a safe and methodical reopening of our economy. While, we will maintain certain statewide standards, like limiting public gatherings and maintaining social distancing, we will be working with the counties, with input from the affected business, to make sure that reopening plans are customizable to the needs and capacity of individual counties.

We will monitor key hospital capacity and test result data to determine the pace and safety for easing more restrictions as we pass through these phases. I must be transparent on this point, it's due to the incredible discipline Nevadans have shown in slowing the

growth of this virus, that we can begin to reopen our state's commercial and recreational activities.

However, we will be watching the data closely, and may have to determine in real time whether it's safe enough to expand, or reduce the pace of this reopening.

I know many of you have suffered significant economic harm from the stay at home orders and I hope you know I fully understand the impact of the tough decisions I have made to keep our state safe. I know many of the working people and businesses in our state hoped we could move faster.

Let me assure you I have taken all the ramifications into account in attempting to balance the physical and economic well being of every Nevadan. I believe we are moving at the right pace and in the right direction. But, that balance, weighted towards keeping Nevadans safe and indeed alive, will always be my guide.

I know many had wanted more frequent communication from me. Frankly, I really intended to have more announcements. Here's the reality, the facts, not the reporting, but the real facts about the spread, impacts and reaction to this terrible virus are constantly evolving and our required actions and reactions are often happening in real time.

However, during this phased reopening we will make every effort to communicate constantly with our local government contacts and keep you, the press, and all Nevadans informed and updated on our progress.

I hope, and I believe, I will have the opportunity soon to personally and publicly thank the so many Nevadans that have brought us this far. Our frontline medical teams, our first responders, local government officials, generous neighbors, dedicated Nevada businesses, government leaders, our entire Congressional delegation, our two Senators, the many out of work Nevadans who are now giving their time to food banks and other great causes.. and this is only a partial list..... THANK YOU.

And, we have a long road ahead... with still many great challenges to face, difficulties to overcome, and many friends and neighbors will need our help, I know we are an unbeatable team. We are, in fact, Nevada United.

Thank you and I will now take some questions.

###